

14 ALLATOONA PASS TRAIL



KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

LENGTH: 3 miles round-trip

CONFIGURATION: Out-and-back with 2 smaller loops

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

SCENERY: Allatoona lakeshore, with excellent long-distance views; deep railroad cut

EXPOSURE: Full sun—partial shade at the lakeshore, shady near the cut

TRAFFIC: Moderate

TRAIL SURFACE: Gravel, hard-packed dirt

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: None

HIKING TIME: 2 hours

ACCESS: Daily, year-round, sunrise—sunset; free

MAPS: USGS *Acworth*

FACILITIES: Nearest are at Red Top Mountain State Park, 1 exit north on I-75

MORE INFO: 770-975-0055; geogiatrails.com/gt/allatoona_pass

SPECIAL COMMENTS: Nearby Cartersville affords a number of additional hiking opportunities. Contact the Bartow County Convention and Visitors Bureau (800-733-2280; visitcartersvillega.org/na/hiking_and_geocacheing).

DISTANCE: 26.1 miles from I-75 North/I-285 Northwest



GPS INFORMATION

N34° 6.835' W84° 42.903'

Lake Allatoona Inn:
632 Old Allatoona Rd. SE
Cartersville, GA 30121

IN BRIEF

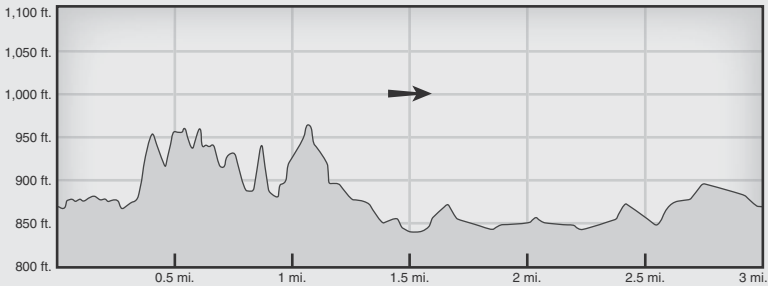
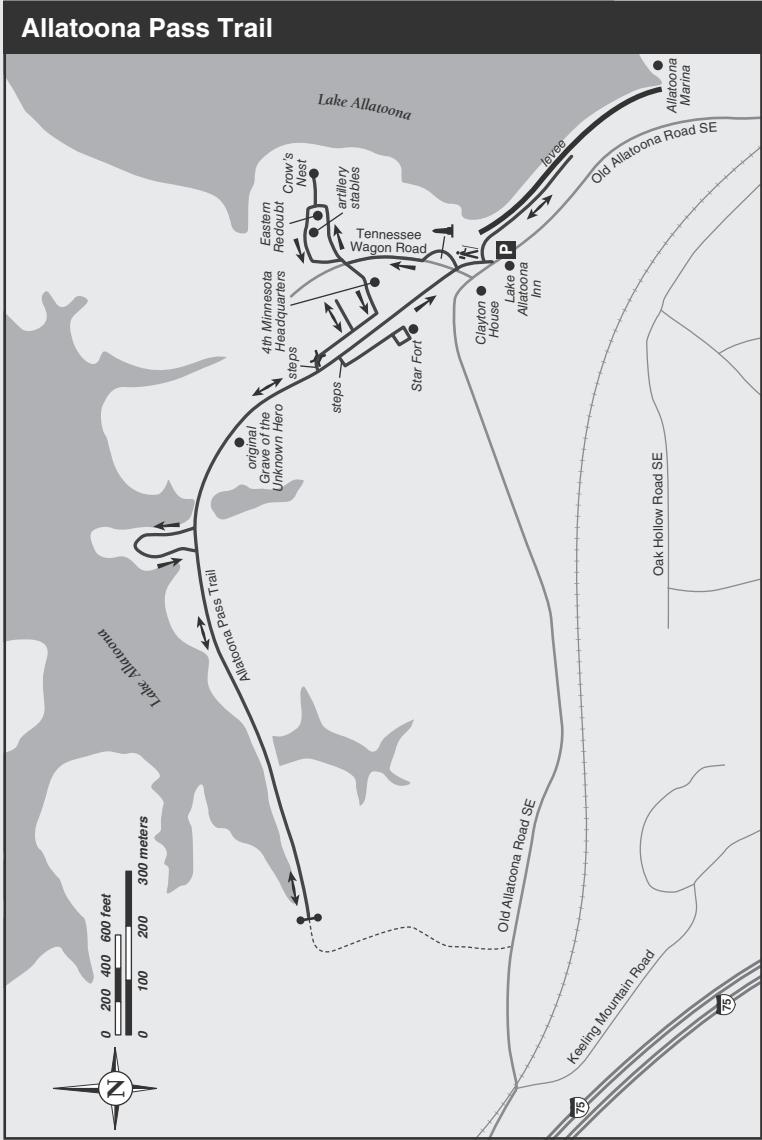
Climb to the tops of two mountains separated by a railroad pass to view the site of the last Civil War battle in the Atlanta area. This trek includes a long, scenic lakeshore walk.

DESCRIPTION

Deep Cut, the local name for Allatoona Pass, was built by slaves during the construction of the Western and Atlantic Railroad. Union General William Tecumseh Sherman, who first rode his horse through the cut while working as a surveyor in 1844, recognized during the Atlanta Campaign that a well-entrenched force could hold the narrow pass against the attacks of a much larger army, choking off supply lines in the process. Sherman avoided a direct attack during the Atlanta Campaign, marching on Kennesaw Mountain from the west. He then directed his engineering chief, Captain Orlando Poe, to fortify the ridge above the pass after taking it in June 1864. On October 5, 1864, Confederate General Samuel French

Directions

Take I-75 North to Exit 283/Allatoona Road/Emerson. Turn right at the end of the ramp. At 0.5 mile the road veers left, crosses railroad tracks, and then curves right—*don't* take the road to the right just before the railroad tracks. At 0.8 mile the modern railroad tracks run to the right, down a steep embankment. At 1.4 miles the road curves sharply right and enters a small community. The parking lot for Allatoona Pass is on the left, 0.1 mile after the curve, across the road from the Lake Allatoona Inn. Go to the second driveway and enter. From your car, walk to the brown gate at the northwest end of the parking lot. A small path lies on the left side of the gate.





The tranquil trail through Allatoona Pass belies its tumultuous Civil War past.

tried to capture the Union star fort above Allatoona Pass, along with the stores and munitions that were so desperately needed by fellow general John Bell Hood's troops. French returned empty-handed, and his group suffered 799 casualties.

At the start of this exciting interpretive trail is a map of the area on which the trail has been superimposed. Directly behind you is the Clayton House, a two-story home with a wide porch that served as a hospital for both the Union and Confederate armies. As you continue, the paved path turns to gravel as you walk toward Deep Cut, and you encounter an immense curtain of bamboo on your left. On your right, additional interpretive signs describe the battle.

From these signs, turn around and walk out onto a substantial 15-foot levee built to impound the waters of Lake Allatoona. A chain across the entrance prevents vehicular traffic. As you walk the levee, the lake comes into view past Allatoona Marina, which is on your right. Return to the trail and turn right. Almost immediately, the pathway turns right again, descending to a small area dedicated to monuments from the states whose men fought this battle. Alabama, North Carolina, Mississippi, Texas, Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa mark the site—no Georgia troops fought in this battle.

Return to the trail and turn right to immediately begin climbing a gravel road to the top of the mountain. The Tennessee Wagon Road connected the Chattahoochee River to Chattanooga. Allatoona, the small community at the southern terminus of the road, was a thriving railroad town at the start of the Civil War.

Much of the town was destroyed when the US Army Corps of Engineers built Lake Allatoona.

As the road climbs and curves left, you can see the Eastern Redoubt across a deep gully to the right. This is the fort commissioned by Captain Poe to extend the defensive line for the Allatoona depot. Used to store Union rations, the depot and warehouses held enough livestock and flour to feed 100,000 men for 10 days.

Atop the hill is a four-way intersection. Turn right and climb a flight of railroad-tie stairs. A few steps down, the trail splits into a loop—take the trail to the right. This wide, shady, well-defined interpretive treadway gives visitors a glimpse into the logistics behind a battle. The trail splits two more times. Each time, take the trail to the right, signed as the trail to the Crow's Nest.

Soldiers used a complex treetop flag system to communicate to Sherman's stronghold at Kennesaw Mountain. Flag systems were maintained for secret communications and in case a telegraph line was cut. During the battle, Sherman ordered the transmission of an uncoded message—TELL ALLATOONA HOLD ON. GENERAL SHERMAN SAYS HE IS WORKING HARD FOR YOU—well aware that French would intercept the communication and be concerned about the presence of Yankees to his rear. Sherman, afraid the attack was a ruse to draw him out of Kennesaw, never left his stronghold.

Follow the signs to the Eastern Redoubt, where a wooden bridge crosses the entrenchments used to create the fort. A short wooden fence atop the earthen mound provided additional protection for soldiers. Turn right and follow the marked trail to the artillery stables. Turn around and return to the pathway. Turn left on the trail, returning to the Tennessee Wagon Road. Cross the road and continue to the headquarters of the 4th Minnesota Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel John Tourtellotte was in charge of troops stationed at Allatoona before Union General John Corse arrived, just before the battle.

Walk 100 feet for your first view of Deep Cut. Notice the two levels of the pass. Railroad workers removed the soft top layer, and then slaves from local plantations removed the solid rock. As the trail turns right and descends to the cut, a side path leads off to the right. Two hundred feet from the main trail, the path overlooks a steep valley and begins circling to the right. Notice entrenchments on your left, used by Union forces during the battle. Confederates from the valley charged this Union line, failed to breach it, and retreated. Union gunfire from here killed many Confederate soldiers in the assault on the star fort.

Return to the main trail, turn right, and continue descending into the cut. Approaching the bottom, the trail turns and dips rather dramatically, crossing a small drainage ditch on a stone-and-dirt bridge. Turn right and follow the level, shaded railroad bed 0.1 mile to the Grave of the Unknown Hero, on the left. This was the original site of the grave of a soldier who died in battle. It was moved when Allatoona Dam was constructed, but for many years engineers on the Western and Atlantic maintained the grave. Return to the railroad bed and then turn left.

At 1.2 miles most of the path is fully exposed to sun as it begins to skirt Allatoona's lakeshore. A few steps ahead, turn right on a side trail to explore a peninsula of the lake. At the peninsula's point, you'll notice a pole with an extended flat top where an eagle has built an aerie. Scan the lake to see similar poles and nests. Return to the railroad bed and turn right. At 1.8 miles a gate across the road, marking the end of the Allatoona Pass Trail, is your sign to turn around and return to Deep Cut.

Back in the cut, wooden stairs on the right at 2.6 miles begin a moderate-to-steep ascent that takes you to a star fort. A wooden walkway bridges entrenchments surrounding the fort's sally port (entrance). The Confederate attack came along a low ridge that is to your right as you step off the bridge. At the height of the battle, men from smaller surrounding redoubts retreated to the fort as the Confederates overran those positions. Imagine 700 men huddled within these confines, surrounded by the enemy, under fire, and running low on ammunition.

Take the wooden walkway to exit the fort, and then follow the trail back to the steps. At the bottom of the steps, turn right. Continue straight ahead to return to your car.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

The **Etowah Indian Mounds Historic Site**, featuring six earthen mounds and a museum with a film, is nearby in Cartersville (813 Indian Mounds Rd. SW; 770-387-3747; gastateparks.org/etowahmounds; open Wednesday–Saturday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., closed January 1, Thanksgiving, and December 25; admission \$3.50–\$5.50). To get there, take I-75 North to Exit 288 and follow the brown signs.